



# ***WPD NEWS***

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **\*\* News Release \*\***

### **WPD Has Holiday Shopping Safety Tips**

Wichita area malls will be packed with holiday shoppers the next few weekends, and the Wichita Police Department's Community Affairs section is offering some tips that can help keep shoppers and their purchases safe.

"The first rule is always be aware of your surroundings, especially in mall parking lots," said Officer Jason Dautrich of Community Affairs. "People who are busy talking on cell phones or whose attention is focused on something else are easy targets for grab-and-run thieves."

Dautrich says it's also a good idea to lock your purchases in your trunk when parking at the mall. "When you're burdened with a lot of purchases, it's very tempting to just throw them on the back seat. Packages that are in plain view are more likely to be stolen by someone who smashes a car window to steal them." If you drive an SUV, says Dautrich, it's a good idea to bring along a blanket or some other covering to keep your purchases out of sight.

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**According to Dautrich, it's also a good idea to save your most expensive purchases for last. "That way, after you've bought those gifts, you can head straight home without worrying whether they will be safe."**

**Dautrich says, while you may not always be able to pick the spot where you park at the mall, you should keep a couple of things in mind.**

**"If you'll be out shopping when it's dark, try to park near a well-lighted or well-traveled area. Also, have your keys ready before you approach your vehicle. Make sure you check that no one is hiding in your back seat. Just as importantly, make sure you get in your car quickly, immediately lock your doors, and drive away as soon as possible."**

**Finally, Dautrich says it's important that parents pay close attention to where their children are at all times while shopping.**

**"Make sure you keep your children near you and don't let them wander around unsupervised. People who abduct children target those whose parents aren't paying attention to where they are."**

**Dautrich says these and other holiday shopping precautions can help make this a safe and enjoyable season."**